



# CULTIVATING GREATER RESILIENCE DURING COVID-19



AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MAINTAINING MENTAL  
HEALTH DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

A GOOD *place*



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The global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted people all over the world. Despite being several months into this virus, it is still hard to grapple with its magnitude and the effect on everyday life. The shock of a ‘novel’ coronavirus and the rupture to jobs, routines, and relationships has planted a wave of fear and anxiety in most people. How do we ground ourselves when it feels like there is no ground to stand on? Even if one has not contracted the virus, there is no doubt that life has been turned upside down by its spread.

Here are some tips and practices to help get you through these difficult times.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this document is for information purposes only. This information is not a substitute for proper diagnosis, treatment, or advice from a mental health professional.

# Part 1: As Individuals

## Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a mental state that is achieved by focusing on the present moment, while recognizing one's thoughts and feelings. It is a practice that teaches us to attune our attention to the place and sensations in the moment. Being mindful can help us be in the moment which can enable worries to disappear.



Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Take a curious approach to your thoughts. Notice each thought and try not to be overwhelmed. Try not to judge yourself for whatever thoughts come to mind.
- Try and notice small sensations and feelings throughout the day. For example, take note of how different instruments sound in a song while listening to music or the feeling of water against your hands when washing dishes.

## Create Structure

Being in quarantine, boundaries are necessary, particularly for those of us working from home. A separation between daytime and evening, weekdays and weekend, family time and individual time are critical to getting things done and staying motivated.



Most of us are used to natural buffer zones between our work and home life such as commuting to work or running a quick errand. For people working remotely these days, closing the laptop does not afford enough of a transition.

Here are some tips to get your mind and body on board for a work-life balance:

- Get dressed for the day
- Have a designated work space
- Avoid working through meals
- Create a fixed schedule
- Limit time spent on news and social media
- Create different music playlists for work and play





## Increase Self-Care

Self-care is important to maintain a healthy relationship with yourself and to produce positive feelings and develop a healthy self-esteem. Here are some tips that AGP therapists have found to be most helpful:

- Get a good night's sleep
- Eat well
- Exercise daily, even if just a quick walk
- Meditate
- Listen to music
- Keep a diary
- Start a new book or a test a new recipe
- Develop a bedtime routine
- Find your green thumb
- Connect with loved ones virtually or from a safe distance
- Start seeing a therapist and explore telehealth options

## Connect with Yourself

We could all improve our relationship with ourselves, especially now. We can start by asking ourselves:

- What do I love about myself?
- What qualities would I like to continue to cultivate?
- How can I nurture myself and give myself what I need?
- What do I need now and has this changed recently?



Increasing awareness of our wants and needs strengthens feelings of self-worth. This improves our relationships with ourselves and others.

## Allow Negative Feelings

There is a lot of pressure on people to be positive these days, but it is okay to be sad at times. The emotional highs and lows we feel during this time are a natural response to all the turbulence in the world. It is important to give ourselves permission to feel all the feelings, whether good or bad. Taking time to consider and communicate our feelings can help us to feel more positive.

## Take a Break

Taking a mental health day or a few personal days off right now may feel like a waste of personal or vacation time, but it can be beneficial in the short and long term. It is important to find time to disconnect from work especially as home and work life merge into each other during quarantine.

## Part 2: For Our Relationships

### Communicate Effectively

For a lot of us, sheltering-in-place has meant hunkering down with our partners, and in some cases, spending more time with them than we ever have before. The disruption to our habits and routines means that our relationships have to find a new rhythm. Here are some tips to help us engage in important or challenging conversations and to address relationship issues as they come up.



Telling a loved one how you feel about a problem or behavior can be difficult. A non-threatening environment that allows for an open and honest conversation can be made possible with these tips.

- Use 'I feel' statements when communicating
- Actively listen to one another and validate each other's feelings
- Abstain from using blaming language or passive aggression
- Express appreciation
- Have a code word or phrase in place that communicates when you are not able to engage, but agree on a time later when you are able to express feelings
- Communicate through body language as non-verbal affection and cues can go a long way

## Vulnerability Cycle

It is important to be vulnerable in any relationship - whether with a partner, sibling, or parent - so that both parties feel comfortable with one another. Try being more open and trusting, and create time for emotional connection with these tips:

- Understand your own coping mechanisms and that of your partners
- Provide insight into your feelings to avoid unnecessary conflict
- Focus on listening and look for common ground



## Setting Intentional Time

Quantity of time spent with a partner does not correlate to the quality of time shared. Whether it is a show to binge watch together or a leisurely socially-distanced stroll, take the time to unwind and focus on each other. Make sure you honor the commitment; reliability is crucial over this stretch. Be there for your partner when you say you will.





In conclusion, be good to yourself and your partner. Take the time and space that you both need. As overwhelming as it all can be, it is important to take a step back and reflect as this is a difficult time for everyone. The AGP team hopes the tips in this guide can help during this unprecedented time. Coping with stress in a healthy and positive way will make you, the people you care about, and the community around you stronger.

If you'd like to connect with a therapist at A Good Place, click [here](#) to schedule your first session.

If you live outside of the New York City area or would like to explore additional therapists, visit [Psychology Today](#) and [Zencare](#).

